

NASA rover launch to Mars delayed to Nov 26

November 21 2011



NASA's Mars Science Laboratory is seen in August 2011 at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. The US space agency has postponed by one day its plan to launch the biggest rover ever to Mars, with the liftoff of the Mars Science Laboratory now set for November 26.

The US space agency has postponed by one day its plan to launch the biggest rover ever to Mars, with the liftoff of the Mars Science Laboratory now set for November 26.

The delay will "allow time for the team to remove and replace a flight termination system battery," NASA said in a statement.

The launch is now scheduled for 10:02 am (1502 GMT) on Saturday from [Cape Canaveral Air Force Station](#), Florida. The [launch window](#)

remains open for one hour and 43 minutes.

Also known as the Curiosity rover, the vehicle is a \$2.5 billion state-of-the-art [robotic machine](#) equipped with video cameras and a sophisticated mobile tool kit for analyzing rocks and soil on the red planet.

With six wheels, a laser beam, drills, rotating eye-like cameras and a built-in lab, Curiosity is "a Mars scientist's dream machine," according to Ashwin Vasavada, MSL deputy project scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The rover will explore the Gale Crater on Mars, just south of that planet's equator, where a range of soils exist and a small mountain gives the rover a chance to climb and analyze samples at different heights.

But first it faces a long, 354-million-mile (570-million-kilometer) journey to get there, taking about eight and a half months before landing in August 2012.

Its main goal is to determine if life ever existed on Mars.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: NASA rover launch to Mars delayed to Nov 26 (2011, November 21) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-11-nasa-rover-mars-nov.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--